

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4714

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 14683

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PORG, UNGA, ID, SY, JO, KU, EG, SA, TC (UAE), QA, BA

SUBJECT: INDONESIA'S REACTION TO SUHARTO VISIT TO MIDDLE EAST

REF: (A) USUN 4043 (NOTAL), (B) DAMASCUS 6618 (NOTAL),

(C) KUWAIT 5793 (NOTAL), (D) DOHA 1191 (NOTAL),

(E) CAIRO 17367 (NOTAL)

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1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT SUHARTO'S OCTOBER 9-19 VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST HAS, IN INDONESIAN EYES, STRENGTHENED THEIR POSITION IN UN DEBATE ON TIMOR. INDONESIANS, HOWEVER, WERE LESS THAN SATISFIED WITH OUTCOME ON TALKS REGARDING ARAB CONCESSIONAL FINANCING. END SUMMARY.

2. ON HIS RETURN TO JAKARTA ON OCTOBER 19, PRESIDENT SUHARTO ANNOUNCED TO THE PRESS THAT THE PURPOSE OF HIS TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST WAS TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN INDONESIA AND MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES. IN A SEPARATE PRESS CONFERENCE, STATE SECRETARY SUDHARMONO SAID THAT THE RESULTS OF THE TRIP WRE "ENCOURAGING AND POSITIVE."

3. OF PRIMARY CONCERN TO INDONESIA ON THE POLITICAL SIDE IS THE EAST TIMOR ISSUE. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, SUHARTO WAS SUCCESSFUL IN GARNERING THE SUPPORT OF BAHRAIN, QATAR AND EGYPT ON ISSUE OF EAST TIMOR INTENGRATION, AND THE "UNDERSTANDING" OF KUWAIT, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND SYRIA. SAUDIA ARABIA AND JORDAN, THE PRESS STATED, HAD SUPPORTED THE INTEGRATION FROM THE BEGINNING. THE JAKARTA DAILY, INDONESIAN TIMES, ALSO SAID THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAD "PROMISED TO HELP INDONESIA DESCRIBE THE ISSUE TO OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH STILL OPPOSE THE INTEGRATION PROCESS." OTHER POLITICAL ISSUES SUCH AS THE "ARCHIPELAGIC STATE PRINCIPLES" AND THE ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY RECEIVED SCANT ATTENTION IN THE JAKARTA PRESS.

4. PRESS GAVE PRIORITY COVERAGE TO THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF SUHARTO'S VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST, PARTICULARLY THE PROSPECTS OF INDONESIA RECEIVING
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CONCESSIONAL AID FROM KUWAIT, SAUDI ARABIA AND THE UAE. CONTRARY TO THE UP-BEAT TENOR IN THE PRESS, HOWEVER, DISCUSSIONS WITH GOI OFFICIALS (BEING REPORTED IN DETAIL BY AIRGRAM) REVEALED THAT INDONESIANS DISAPPOINTED, IF NOT DISILLUSIONED, WITH THE LACK OF CONCRETE RESULTS PARTICULARLY IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH SAUDIS AND KUWAITIS. THE SAUDIS, ONE GOI OFFICIAL OBSERVED, HAVE TOO MUCH GOING ON IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY AND DO NOT APPEAR WILLING TO VENTURE RISK CAPITAL UNLESS THERE IS A DEFINITE PROMISE FOR A GOOD RATE OF RETURN. INDONESIANS REGARDED KUWAITI RESERVATIONS TO SHIP THEIR CRUDE TO PROPOSED REFINERY ON BANTAM ISLAND AS A SLIGHT SETBACK AND ARE NOW WONDERING IF KUWAITI CONCESSIONAL FINANCING FOR THIS PROJECT WILL COME TO FRUITION.
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